



# Prevention of Genital Human Papillomavirus Infection

## WHAT IS THE HEALTH ISSUE?

Genital HPV infection is a sexually transmitted infection that is caused by human papillomavirus (HPV), a group of viruses that includes more than 100 different types. Although most infections remain asymptomatic and resolve without treatment, genital HPV infection is important because some strains can cause genital warts and some can cause abnormal Pap smears, and, rarely, cervical cancer. About 6.2 million Americans acquire a new genital HPV infection each year, and approximately 20 million people are currently infected with HPV.

## WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

- CDC is conducting sentinel surveillance activities in collaboration with six states throughout the country to determine the prevalence in various age groups and populations of specific types of HPV infection in the United States. Women have been enrolled through 35 clinics such as STD, family planning, HIV-care, and primary care clinics
- CDC is also conducting a survey of the general U.S. population to determine population-based prevalence of HPV infections, results of which will be available in late 2005.
- CDC conducted a survey of health care providers to assess knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding genital HPV infections. Results of this survey will help improve screening and treatment for HPV by providing information on health care providers' perceptions as well as factors affecting providers' ability to conduct patient risk assessment, testing, counseling, and partner services.
- CDC is conducting behavioral research to assess the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and impact of diagnosis on women who test positive for high risk types of HPV (HR-HPV) and their partners. These efforts will inform the development of HPV educational messages for women with HR-HPV infection and their sexual partners.
- Based on the above research, CDC developed, and will distribute HPV educational materials to the general public, health care providers, patients and their partners.
- Based on the above research, CDC conducted a webcast for health care providers. *HPV and Cervical Cancer: An Update on Prevention Strategies* is available for replay and continuing education credit on CDC's website.
- CDC is coordinating an HPV Vaccine Workgroup of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) vaccine workgroup to review and monitor the progress in HPV vaccine development, identify gaps in information needed to formulate vaccine recommendations, and provide a framework for discussion about HPV vaccine recommendations. Two vaccines are currently in phase III trials, one produced by GlaxoSmithKline (an HPV 16/18 vaccine) and one produced by Merck (an HPV 16/18/6/11 vaccine). The goals of HPV vaccines are to prevent HPV-associated sequelae including genital warts (if HPV 6/11 are included in the vaccine) cervical cancer precursors, and cervical cancer.

## WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

- Work with public and private partners to increase awareness about genital HPV infection and its relation to genital warts and cervical cancer among the general public, health care providers, and patients and their partners. These efforts include information about key aspects of genital HPV infection such as its prevalence, natural history, modes of transmission, consequences of infection and approaches to prevent genital HPV infection and cervical cancer.
- Improve provider knowledge about HPV and HPV-related clinical and management practices and facilitate HPV-related provider-patient communication.
- Work with ACIP to prepare for licensure of HPV vaccines and develop appropriate recommendations for their use.
- Collaborate within CDC to develop surveillance systems to measure the impact of HPV vaccines.

For information on this and other CDC and ATSDR programs, visit [www.cdc.gov/programs](http://www.cdc.gov/programs).

2005